



**DAZED**

## **Anna Uddenberg's sculptures re-think female identity in consumer culture**



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## Anna Uddenberg

8 IMAGES



This month, the *KALEIDOSCOPE* art space at Milan's *Spazio Maiocchi* will see artist Anna Uddenberg push discussions around “woman as object” to the extreme. This exhibition comprises pieces from Uddenberg's 2017 body of work, where the female form is merged with massage chairs, luxury cars, dentistry chairs, and suitcases. The result: hybrid structures using mesh, fake leather, furs, and even crocs to explore consumer aspiration, and confuse ideas of functionality. Uddenberg says of her work, “I wanted to use the logic and aesthetics of what one recognises as functional, and bend the meaning of function while suggesting new modes of being.” These structures invite us to reconsider our relationship with commercial objects and unpack accepted normalities. Uddenberg sets out to do this by disregarding conventional good taste, co-opting the aesthetics of SUV limousine interiors, elite spas, and first class lounges in a nod to the “narco-architecture” seen in the grandiose McMansions of drug lords. In merging the female form with these aspirational designs, Uddenberg implies that the female identity is all too often represented in terms of fantastical consumer options.

In 2009, Uddenberg became fascinated by escort websites and the language used to describe the women featured. This prompted her to consider the way that women's identities are marketed in the consumer space. In her early work, “The Girlfriend Project” (2009), Uddenberg shows a [video](#) of a woman robotically advertising herself as the “perfect girlfriend experience”. The way that she speaks is akin to an advert for a car or coffee machine: “I am an intelligent and ultra-feminine girl, who is full of life and energy”, she says, “I have a university background and my passions include art, technology, travels and

participation to formal and informal events... I specialise in a genuine girlfriend experience. Just be aware, on a public outing with me, you will find that heads will turn, and you will find yourself the envy of everyone." Speaking about this work to *Radar*, Uddenberg explains "I thought of the girlfriend as a user-friendly, intuitive tool."

## "I thought of the girlfriend as a user-friendly, intuitive tool" – Anna Uddenberg

These discussions around functionality and the female identity are similarly evident in Uddenberg's "Transit Mode – Adventure" (2014-16), pieces of which feature in the exhibition at *Spazio Maiocchi*. In "Transit Mode", the hyper-femme figures are contorted, splayed on the floor legs akimbo, showcasing rear-ends wedgied with yoga pants, and breasts busting free. They clutch selfie sticks, twist themselves around branded prams and luggage, and writhe out from pastel-coloured active wear. As the figures intertwine with these objects, Uddenberg asks us to draw a parallel between their female identity, sexuality, and worth, and the consumer objects that twist and bend their bodies.

From "The Girlfriend Experience" to Uddenberg's latest exhibition at *Spazio Maiocchi*, Uddenberg keeps asking us to evaluate how the female identity is represented and mediated by commercial products and environments. We see how her notion of "girlfriend as commodity" is present in her hybrid structures, with the ostentatious narco-architecture paralleling the way that women are often marketed in terms of "comfort" and "luxury". We find ourselves positioned as participators in her world of reimagined functionality, considering how we would interact with her creations: "what is their purpose?", "how do we use them?".

*ANNA UDDENBERG at KALEIDOSCOPE is running from 16 June-13 July at Milan's [Spazio Maiocchi](#) @spaziomaiocchi. You can find out more [here](#).*